

How to Vote? (<https://team1.sos.state.tx.us/voterws/vw/faces/Introduction.jsp>)

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REGISTER TO
VOTE
([HTTP://VOTETE](http://votete))

WHO, WHAT,
WHERE,
WHEN, HOW
([HTTP://VOTETE](http://votete))

MILITARY &
OVERSEAS
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VOTERS WITH
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Who, What, Where, When, How

[Who \(/voting/who\)](#)

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How to Vote

When you arrive at the polling place, you will be asked to present one of the seven (7) acceptable forms of [photo ID](#) ([./register-to-vote/need-id](#)), unless you are a voter with a permanent exemption on your voter registration certificate. The election official will ask if you have moved and then ask you to sign the list of people who have voted in the precinct.

Depending on the type of election – local, statewide, national, or combination – you will be handed:

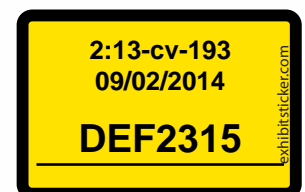
- A paper ballot on which you will select your choices and which will be counted by hand;
- A paper ballot on which you will select your choices by darkening an oval, completing an arrow, or “marking” with the aid of a voting machine; or
- A slip of paper with a numerical access code or, in some counties, a ballot activator card. In the next available voting booth, enter your code or card and let the on-screen instructions guide you through the process of electronic voting.

Easy, right? For more information on your rights as a voter, please refer to our section on [“Your Rights.” \(/your-rights/\)](#)

Texas uses three methods to vote.

Texans cast their votes by paper ballot or by using an optical scan system or DRE. (DRE stands for Direct Record Electronic system. A DRE also allows for the connection of an audio/headphone attachment, simple touch devices, or a sip and puff tube that enables the blind, elderly, physically disabled, and non-reading Texans to vote independently and in private.) The type of system on which you vote is decided by the political subdivision (county, city, school district, etc.) in which you live. Depending on where you live, you may also use a different system for early voting than on Election Day. Here’s a brief summary regarding the different voting methods:

- Paper ballots are still used as the primary way of voting in a number of Texas counties. Voters mark their ballot by hand with an indelible marker (a marker that cannot be erased) or pen and place their finished ballot in a ballot box. Local election officials then count the votes by hand.
- Optical scan voting systems enable voters to mark their choices on pre



-printed ballots by either connecting "arrows" or filling in "bubbles" next to the candidates' names. The paper ballot is then inserted into an electronic ballot counter, which then counts the marked "bubbles" or "arrows" on each ballot and automatically computes the totals for each candidate and/or issue.

- DREs (Direct Record Electronic systems) enable voters to record their choices electronically directly into the machine. There are several types of DREs (some have a dial while others use a touch screen), but essentially they all enable voters to move back and forth between screens (ballot pages) to select the candidates and/or issues for whom they wish to vote. Once a voter has made his or her choices, the DRE provides a summary screen that presents those choices and gives the voter the ability to go back and make any changes before pressing the "Vote" or "Cast Ballot" button. One of the benefits of a DRE system is that it prevents "over-voting"; that is, it stops the voter from selecting two candidates or options in a race where only one is allowed. As well, a DRE gives the voter an opportunity to correct "under-voting," or failing to select any candidate or option in a race.

Each polling place in Texas must offer at least one accessible voting system (either a DRE or an AutoMark), with the limited exception of sparsely populated jurisdictions conducting non-federal elections.

In Texas, you'll vote on one of these systems.

The State of Texas has selected and certified voting systems from three different vendors: Election Systems & Software (ES&S), Hart InterCivic, and Premier Election Solutions (formerly Diebold, Inc.). Regardless of the system you're using, know this: When voting in the Lone Star State, you count. Texas makes sure. Following are the voting systems certified for use in Texas. (You can click on the name of each voting system to go to the manufacturer's product description page.)

From Dominion Voting Systems, Inc. (formerly Premier Elections and Diebold, Inc.)

- [AccuVote® TS or TSX \(formerly Diebold TSX\), a DRE voting system \(.../voting-systems/accuvotets-or-tsx/\)](#)
- [AccuVote®-OS, an optical scan voting system \(.../voting-systems/optical-scan-voting-system/\)](#)

From Election Systems & Software:

- [iVotronic, a DRE voting system \(http://www.essvote.com/HTML/products/ivotronic.html\)](#)
- [ES&S Model 100, an optical scan voting system \(http://www.essvote.com/HTML/products/m100.html\)](#)

- [ES&S AutoMARK, a machine that also assists disabled voters to mark a paper ballot](http://www.essvote.com/HTML/products/automark.html)
[\(http://www.essvote.com/HTML/products/automark.html\)](http://www.essvote.com/HTML/products/automark.html)

From Hart InterCivic:

- [eSlate, a DRE voting system](http://www.hartic.com/pages/187)
[\(http://www.hartic.com/pages/187\)](http://www.hartic.com/pages/187)
- [eScan, an optical scan voting system](http://www.hartic.com/pages/215)
[\(http://www.hartic.com/pages/215\)](http://www.hartic.com/pages/215)

Take your voting machine for a test spin.

In many Texas counties, voters will cast their ballots using either an optical scan system or, as mandated by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), a DRE system. For step-by-step instructions on using (1) a paper ballot, (2) an optical scan voting system, (3) the ES&S AutoMARK (an electronic machine that assists disabled voters to mark a paper ballot), or (4) one of the DRE systems certified in Texas, click on the appropriate link. For an interactive tutorial on the HAVA sanctioned DRE system employed by your county, use the drop down menu to locate your county and then click "Go."

Have fun voting!

Texas Counties Go

Step-by-step instructions for using:

- [Paper ballot \(/voting-systems/paper-ballot/\)](#)
- [Optical scan voting system \(/voting-systems/optical-scan-voting-system/\)](#)
- [ES&S AutoMARK \(/voting-systems/ess-automark/\)](#)
- [AccuVote®TSX \(/voting-systems/accuvotets-or-tsx/\)](#)
- [ES&S iVotronic \(/voting-systems/ess-ivotronic/\)](#)
- [Hart InterCivic eSlate \(/voting-systems/hart-intercivic-eslate/\)](#)

Not Registered?

To vote in Texas, you must be registered. Simply pick up a [voter registration application](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqvr.shtml) (<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqvr.shtml>), fill it out, and mail it at least 30 days before the election date.
[MORE ABOUT REGISTRATION >](http://www.vote/register-to-vote/)
[\(http://www.vote/register-to-vote/\)](http://www.vote/register-to-vote/)

[Home \(/\)](#) | [Register to Vote \(http://www.vote/register-to-vote/\)](http://www.vote/register-to-vote/) | [Who, What, Where, When, How \(http://www.vote/voting/\)](http://www.vote/voting/) | [Military & Overseas Voters \(http://www.vote/military-overseas-voters/\)](http://www.vote/military-overseas-voters/) | [Voters With Special Needs \(http://www.vote/voters-with-special-needs/\)](http://www.vote/voters-with-special-needs/) | [Your Rights \(http://www.vote/your-rights/\)](http://www.vote/your-rights/) | [FAQ \(http://www.vote/faq/\)](http://www.vote/faq/) | [Resources \(http://www.vote/resources/\)](http://www.vote/resources/)

Remind your friends to vote

Spread the word, share important election information with your friends and family!
[MORE ABOUT REMINDING >](http://www.vote/remind/)
[\(http://www.vote/remind/\)](http://www.vote/remind/)

Voting is easy, so is getting the facts

Texas must show an approved photo ID when voting in person.
[MORE ABOUT PHOTO ID >](http://www.vote/register-to-vote/need-id/)
[\(http://www.vote/register-to-vote/need-id/\)](http://www.vote/register-to-vote/need-id/)

(800) 252-VOTE www.sos.state.tx.us (<http://www.sos.state.tx.us>)

[Switch to our mobile site \(http://www.vote/voting/how?wmpm_switcher=mobile\)](http://www.vote/voting/how?wmpm_switcher=mobile)